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Minutes 09-16-10

Meeting Minutes

September 16, 2010

5:30-7:00PM

Present: Ethel Doyle, Kathy Hirsch, Cindy Sheridan, Lynn Horgan, John Scheft, Cindy Starks, Cindy Bouvier, Natsaha Waden, Christine Connolly, Captain Bongiorno, Colleen Leger,

Attendees: 11

Welcome:

Coalition members were welcomed back after summer recess.

- Members reviewed and approved the 2010-2011 meeting schedule, with the exception of the tentative Community Forum date on March 16th. Colleen asked for feedback on whether or not to host a community forum this year. Considering the low attendance at last year's forum, and at parent forums in general, it was decided that AYHSC should forgo a large-scale community event in March. Instead, members suggested that the Coalition develop a presentation (based on the YRBS presentation from last year's forum) and "shop it around" to organized parent and student groups in town (elementary school and Ottoson PTOs, AHS clubs etc...). It was recommended that we also include social norms messages in these presentations, as there is wide-scale misperception among high school students about the level of peer substance use. Other topics addressed throughout the conversation included: identifying practical opportunities for community members to get involved with the Coalition, expanding the AYHSC newsletter recipient list; creating user-friendly AYHSC links on the APS webpage; and encouraging community members to learn more about the coalition by referring them to the AYHSC website.
- After deciding not to host a community forum this year, members agreed that the Coalition meeting in March should be held on the second Thursday (3/10) of the month, instead of the following Thursday, which falls on St. Patrick's Day. The meeting schedule will be corrected to reflect this change.
- Action steps: tune-up YRBS presentation; train Coalition members to deliver presentation; outreach to parent and youth groups; identify practical ways to engage community members in Coalition work.

Conclusion of DFC Year 2:

- Summary of Accomplishments: Colleen provided a summary of the Coalition's activities over the past year. AYHSC uses a comprehensive approach to achieve community change, and employs multiple strategies for a broad and sustaining impact. Colleen described a wide-range of Coalition activities that served to: 1) provide information 2) build skills 3) provide Support 4) reduce barriers 5) change incentives 6) alter the physical environment and 7) change policies.

- Annual Report: Coalition members discussed how to communicate to the community, as well as to current and potential funders, the Coalition's past year activities. It was agreed that a more official report should be included in the Town's Annual report, and that a one-page summary of activities should be used to share our work with the community. It was suggested that we use future monthly meeting time to work on these reports.

Coalition Updates

- Diversion: Cindy provided a summary of recent developments to the Diversion program, including expanding the number of referral sources to include the Clerk of Courts, and instituting a new APD policy of automatically referring to Diversion minors cited with possession (& consumption) of marijuana. She acknowledged that there are still issues to be worked out with the Clerk of Courts with regard to diverting juveniles post-arrest and post-arraignment. In addition, Cindy and Colleen have been working with Deacon, the Coalition Evaluator to develop a protocol for evaluating the Diversion Program. The Diversion Committee will meet soon to discuss implementing this evaluation protocol. According to Deacon, industry standard for tracking "long-term" behavioral outcomes requires tracking of participants for six months post program completion. Cindy also provided an update on unpaid marijuana citations issued in Arlington. The Coalition is exploring filing in small claims court on behalf of the Town to collect on these fines. Damages could include staff time and recovery of filing fees.
- Guiding Good Choices: Two workshop series have been scheduled, and are included in the APS Parent Forum Brochures for 2010/2011. The first series begins on October 6th and will run through November 3rd. Cindy Sheridan and Maryanne Andrew will co-facilitate the first series. The second series is scheduled for Wednesday nights in January/February, and will be facilitated by Mindy Davin and Sheryl Cohn. We would like to schedule two more workshop series between now and next September, and we are looking to train new facilitators.
- AYCC: Christine and Lynn provided a summary of the recent developments at AYCC. Leon Cantor retired from his position as AYCC Director, after 32 years of service. Phyllis Brown was hired as the new director, and Linda Suzuki as assistant director. The agency will move forward under a new fee-for-service model, in an effort to become self-sustaining. Previously, AYCC did not have adequate staffing to manage the high volume of cases referred there, but with new fee-for service counselors, AYCC will be capable of managing a larger caseload, while addressing fluctuations in need throughout the community. All counselors will be licensed clinical social workers, and the agency will accept all major health insurances. Captain Bongiorno informed the group that the Arlington Police Department, in partnership with Health and Human Services and the Edinburg Center, would be hiring a social worker to respond to, and follow up on incidents in the community that warrant ongoing social service services.
- Cemusa/MBTA: Colleen informed the group that the MBTA and the advertising firm, Cemusa have proposed installing and maintaining bus shelters in Arlington, at no cost to the Town, in exchange for revenue from advertisements on the shelters. In addition, the Town would receive a percentage of the advertising revenue for each shelter. Of concern to the Coalition, and other community members, is the content of advertising to be placed on these shelters. According to its proposal, Cemusa would adhere to the MBTA's advertising policy, which currently prohibits nudity, tobacco and violence, but not alcohol. Most other major cities prohibit alcohol advertising on public transit, but the MBTA has failed to include this provision in its advertising policy. Considering extensive research linking youth exposure to alcohol advertising with increased youth alcohol consumption, AYHSC is urging the Town to include language prohibiting alcohol advertising on shelters, should the Town negotiate a contract with Cemusa. There is a hearing before the Board of Selectmen on October 4th.

Upcoming Events

- Health and Safety Day-Parent program : Tuesday 9/21 from 6:30-9:00pm. The Health and Safety Day, coordinated by Andrea Razi will include student (7-12th grades) and parent presentations. The topic of this year's program is mental health. AYHSC will have a resource table in the lobby outside the auditorium with information about the Coalition, AYCC, upcoming drug take-back events and Guiding Good Choices. Lynn volunteered to help Colleen staff the resource table
- Arlington Town Day: Saturday 9/25, from 8:30-3:00pm. Colleen sent around a sign-up sheet for Coalition members to volunteer at either the AYHSC booth or at the AYHSC resource table, which will be set up inside the Robbins House. At the AYHSC booth, coalition members and Arlington Police will oversee the drug-take back program from 10:00am-2:00pm.
- Guiding Good Choices: Wednesday nights from October 6th –November 3rd. Colleen asked Coalition members for help publicizing the workshops.
- Community Collection Day: Saturday 11/13, from 9:00-1:00pm. Volunteers needed to help out at the event, and to help publicize.

DFC Year 3 Work Plan

- Colleen distributed a copy of the AYHSC work plan for the upcoming year. The work plan was submitted in February with the Coalition's continuation grant application, and may need revising. Coalition members were asked to look over the work plan, and make note if there are activities that should be changed, added or excluded. There was not sufficient time to complete this activity during the meeting. Members were asked to look over the work plan, and to email Colleen with any comments. Also, it was agreed that time would be set aside at the next meeting to prioritize, flesh out, and develop action plans for the activities included in the work plan.
- Colleen recommended setting aside time at monthly Coalition meetings to work on specific projects, identified in advance of the meeting, and included on the agenda. Coalition members will have the opportunity then to select a project that interests them, and to come prepared with ideas for project coordination and action steps. Coalition members were asked to consider the activities listed on the work plan and to email Colleen with suggestions on which projects to cover first. Cindy Starks informed the group about an excellent resource for parents created and distributed by the Lexington Public Schools. There was substantial interest among Coalition members to create a parent resource guide, similar to Lexington's "Red Flags and Resources." This potential project will be included on the next month's agenda.

Adjournment

The next Coalition meeting will be held on October 21, 2010.